

**REMARKS BY
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TO THE
AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION**

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ADMIRAL MICHAEL MULLEN: It's kind of intimidating. Actually, my staff asked me to get through my remarks as quickly as possible so I could get to as many questions from as many lawyers as possible. (Laughter.) I don't know if I'm going to keep that promise. (Laughter.) To all of you, thanks for what you do and also to Hank – actually, while Hank asked me to do this, when he asked me, he left me with the impression that Emmy (sp) was coming, which is why I accepted. (Laughter.)

But as Al said, some years ago – actually that “some” is approaching better than 45 years ago when we met – and have been lifelong friends, very special individual and I would guess that the association is at least in shipshape and was ecstatic to know that somehow the wisdom – there was wisdom out there that selected him to do this job. I will speak for actually just a few minutes – and, I know, I'm going to try to get to your questions. And I'll talk – what I'd like to do is just cover three areas that I've put in my priority – order of priority box, if you will.

The first of all is clearly the instability in the Middle East, in the broader Middle East. And what's the military strategy associated with that and how do we bring to the United States military to bear on that critical part of the world that is unstable, at best, with great potential for increased instability. And the way I describe that is an area from Beirut to Tehran and certainly extended to Afghanistan to Pakistan. And it offers an immense number of challenges. Certainly the Iraq War and the improvements there, for somebody that has been there as many times as I have, particularly over the last year, since the surge has been truly remarkable, far beyond what any of us expected over that period of time. It's a great credit to General Dave Petraeus, whose strategy was put in place, but I give a greater amount of credit to the young men and women who actually fought in that surge, in the toughest fighting of the war, lived and died in that surge and their families. And they are the ones that really carried it and delivered it to the success that it has seen.

But by no means in saying that do I think that we are done in Iraq. It's still fragile. It's still reversible there, but it has given them, the people of Iraq, an umbrella, a growing umbrella of security under which the economy is starting to grow, the politicians are being very political

and in a very public debate about many things, not the least of which is the SOFA which is out there right now. And there are development projects that are ongoing and so when you see a country I believe coming to life in ways that few of us would have imagined not very many months ago.

The other war that we are in, in that part of the world, is clearly in Afghanistan, which is not going well right now, which is – the vector in Afghanistan is one of concern to me, where the insurgency is growing, the safe haven in Pakistan. And I don't talk about Afghanistan without talking about Pakistan because I think they are inextricably linked, have been forever and clearly are now – and that our approach – and there are many reviews that are up underway right now to look at the strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. And then it must be both of those, almost a regional approach, to look at how we get at this for the future and the challenges which continue. If we don't have enough troops there, we have actually re-missioned some troops which were headed for Iraq a couple of months ago; we re-missioned them for Afghanistan and even when they arrive, some six or 7,000 additional troops, we'll still be short troops that we need, that the commander on the ground needs there.

The three-legged stool of both the security piece, the economic piece, the government's piece – all of that has to work there as well. And Afghanistan, if you know anything about Afghanistan, it's a very poor country, fifth-poorest country in the world. The budget surplus, reserves in Iraq this year are some 60 or \$70 billion or more; the total revenues in Afghanistan this year are \$700 million, for a country which is larger, with about \$10 million more people, and it just speaks to the challenge that we have: 42 countries engaged in Afghanistan, obviously NATO is there. But many countries and doing it in a comprehensive way that includes, again, this linkage with Pakistan, eliminating that safe haven, getting the insurgency reduced to the point where it cannot come back; it does not have a place to train in, live in Pakistan and cannot come back into Afghanistan.

And, again, developing the armed forces – and the army is actually coming along; the Afghan army has come along pretty well, developing an armed force which is an Afghan armed force to provide for its own security as rapidly as we can and alongside that have a police force which, not unlike Iraq, is behind in its development – we've got a long way to go there as well – and having both the security umbrella and, again, the economic engine start to kick in, although I think it will certainly take longer given Iraq's resources in Afghanistan than it has in Iraq.

And it's going to take that dedicated, comprehensive international effort in the long run to get to a functioning central government, enabling the tribal leaders in the provinces and the villages throughout the country as well as providing for the rule of law and governance in a country that has not had that for a while. So we're clearly still focused on those two wars very heavily, in terms of priorities, but when you look at the broader Middle East and you think of Iran and they continue to work towards the development of nuclear weapons, which I believe will continue to destabilize that part of the world and, if I can just use Pakistan and India, for example, would – seemingly, when one country of the region gets it, other countries in the region think they have to have it. And so it is not just the potential intended consequence of having nuclear weapons threatening the region with that capability, but it's the unintended consequences of that which I worry about in a region that's already pretty unstable.

And then the extension of Iran and what I call, not just from a nation-state standpoint, but the network standpoint, because they are knitted very well to Hezbollah in Lebanon and a destabilizing influence there, clearly, again, with Syria, knitted with Hamas and those challenges continue to abound. So lots of challenges in that part of the world, more than anywhere else. And, right now, for the United States, we've got upwards of 80 percent, 70 to 80 percent of our forces that I have available focused in that part of the world and have had for a significant period of time.

Our forces have been doing this – this goes to the – sort of the second big priority is the health of the force. And Ann talked a little bit about this, but Deborah and I spend a lot of time trying to take the temperature of what's going on with our military members, their families. I do it in the field; I do it in both Iraq and Afghanistan as they're deployed as well as back here. And they have – we recently spent some time at Fort Stewart with a brigade from the Third Infantry Division, which had just returned from a deployment. And I was in the town hall in the afternoon with about 500 of them and I said, just as I count, tell me, put your hands down when I count the number of deployments that you've been on. And I said, I got to – and these were E-6s and above – so the senior non-commissioned officers, for the most part. And as I got to four deployments since 2002, somewhere between 40 and 45 percent of those hands were still in the air. And these are six-month, eight-month, 12-month, 15-month deployments.

Some of you – not many, but some of you were around when we fought in Vietnam and as a sort of a baseline, they were one-year deployments, they weren't unit deployments; they were individual deployments. Some people did more than one year, but it was sort of one year and that's the time that you spent. So think about where we are and the pressure that we put on – in particular, our ground forces. Our Marine Corps has been at the same number of deployments; it's just that they've been out there for seven and they're back for seven. And that's the key here, is they're only back for as long as they've been deployed and, in some cases, less time.

So – and if I were to look through a lens and go back to 2001 and said I had made four or five deployments at this point with my ground forces and not have – and that I could do that, I would have given that a second thought. And, yet, it is an incredibly resilient force; it has seen success. There's a skip in their step. What we've got to do now is work to build some time at home. I call it – some of you, I met a few of you earlier in the military, we call it – there are things like: personnel tempo, how much time you've been deployed; operational tempo, how much time the unit has been deployed. I actually use the term home tempo. And that is, when you're home, how many nights are you sleeping in your own bed, because you come back for 12 months and, half that time, you're dedicated to – is dedicated to training to getting ready to go again.

So there's an enormous amount of pressure. There's an enormous amount of pride and the best military I've been associated with since I met Hank, which is, as I indicated, was some time ago. It's certainly vastly different from where – from the military that I joined: an all-volunteer force, the best I've ever seen. And we can't take it for granted in any way. We've got to pay attention to that pressure. So balancing that is a huge challenge. And the extension of

that is not just to those who are under enormous pressure through those multiple deployments, but to take good care of those who have been wounded and the families of the fallen, who have sacrificed so much. And by that, I mean, take care of them for the rest of their lives.

When you – we spend a lot of time with wounded, with families of the wounded. And if you've done that, you know, first of all, it's inspirational. No matter who you engage that are wounded in their families, I always take away more than I'm able to give. They are inspiring. So many of them want back into the fight. They want to know where their buddies are. Those of you that have been in contact understand that. They want to get back to their units, on the one hand. On the other hand, if they're no longer able to serve, their American dream, their dream hasn't changed. They'd still like to go to school, they'd still like to get married, they'd love to have kids. They'd like their kids to get a good education and they'd like to go – (inaudible) – with Iraq.

And I believe we as a country have the resources to make this happen, but our system is one where the Department of Defense does the best we can to take care and we have done an enormous amount. And it's gotten a lot better than it was a year or two ago. We still have a long way to go to treat post-traumatic stress, to treat TBI, these things that, in some ways, are new to us in terms of developing the understanding and capacity to take care of these challenges and to ensure that we do the best we can with the Department of Defense. Then they move on to the Veterans Administration, a place in which I didn't grow up. I heard about it and, actually, we've now spent time in veterans' hospitals and they're extraordinary people doing extraordinary things. And, in many cases, if you were ill, it's where you would want to be. And that's a great credit to them.

But we take these young, our most precious resource who have sacrificed so much, pushed them to the Veterans Affairs world and hope that that goes well and then, from there, we push them out to society and we hope that their lives are in good shape. And, in fact, that's – we need to bring that system of communities throughout the land, the VA and DOD closer together.

And I use the example of the Israelis. The Israelis, when an Israeli – and I found this out having this discussion in Israel last December with the head of the Israeli Defense Force – that when someone is injured or there's a fallen member of the IDF there, there is constant care for them and there is a requirement for a commander of a unit to take accountability, basically sign accountability law, as it was explained to me, that essentially takes care of and stays in touch with members of that unit who have been injured or who have fallen, and their families, for the rest of his tour or her tour, as the case might be.

So it is accountable and they are in touch with them. And that's a little different model from the one we have in the United States. We need to have a model here where we have the same effect. So, again, we've improved dramatically from where we were a couple of years ago, but we still have miles to go. And I'm looking for people in communities throughout America to connect with those families who are now living in these communities and to make sure that they have the kind of support that they need and that they can continuously depend on and it's very – the kind of support, the time of the support, but it's across that American dream that they still want. We have to figure out how to make that happen.

And, at the same time, I also – we try very much to focus on the families of the fallen who have given so much and, in many cases, still want to stay in touch with the Army, with the Navy, with the Marine Corps or the Air Force. And we've got to make sure that we've got connections with them because they truly have given it all. And we couldn't ask more of them.

So there's a big people and health-of-the-force piece associated with that. When I get asked about our future – and there is certainly a financial crisis that we're in the middle of, and I'll be glad to take about that – and there are worries, constant worries about all of this: Is the defense budget going to come down? What does that mean? I really believe that assure our future, more than any other way, by taking care of these young people who are sacrificing so much and that these young O3s and staff sergeants who are out there in the fight right now, keeping the talent in, in the long run, no matter what happens to the budget, will ensure that we have a great military for the future. And the complement of that is true as well.

So we – so I focus a great deal on the retention aspect to make sure that we keep this combat-hardened forces, the most combat-hardened force in the history of our military, by the way, to be the guarantee-or – or the guarantor – of a great military for the future.

And then, lastly, the third priority is the rest of the world. (Laughter.) And there is a pretty big rest of the world out there. And, actually, there is the world where we're engaged with smaller units. We have our Navy and our Air Force engaged around the world, globally, making a difference in terms of being out and about, establishing and sustaining relationships to mitigate risk for the long run. And there are risks in other parts of the world as well. Whether it's in the Pacific – we just – we also just recently stood up a brand-new four-star command to be able to engage and support and assist the continent of Africa, not without some controversy. And I understand that, but more than anything else, the reason we did that was because it's such an important continent, not just now, but in the future. And how do we ensure the focus and establish the military-to-military relationships which underpin so many relationships in so many countries? And we know that, globally, and that's really the focus of that command.

There are, I believe, some growing requirements to pay attention to in our own hemisphere. I was born in Los Angeles, raised in Los Angeles. But growing up in the '50s and the '60s and the '70s, I was taught to look east and west. We don't look as well north and south in our country as we should. Yet these are our neighbors, very important trading partners, tremendous amount of shared values in so many ways. And I think we've got to pay attention there as well.

So there are lots of challenges in lots of parts of the world, not the least of which, some of which, are very close to home. So that's just a quick, walk around the priority list. And, oh, by the way, underpinned by the financial crisis in which we find ourselves, the meaning of global has taken on a whole new very real meaning to me, certainly, as I watch the leaders of 20 countries meet together recently from around the world and have just said, we are – (inaudible) – we are more linked than we realize. And, in addition to that, I find myself in the middle of a transition to a new administration and making sure that in that transition, I provide – continue to provide the best military advice to our commander in chief. And we have one commander in

chief in this country – it will change on the 20th of January – so being able to do that and, yet, have a requirement certainly to provide support to a transition team that is coming in as we speak, certainly over the next many weeks to get ready to assume the responsibility that that team – and certainly President-elect Obama – will take when he gets sword in on the 20th of January.

So there's plenty on the plate. What's on your minds?

(Q: Sir, thank you. We appreciate your – (inaudible, off mike) – and all that you do for us. I'm Steve Chequer (ph) from New York. Question about Afghanistan and maybe it's a little bit of a tactical question: Is this really a military fight at this point? In the space of one week, you read about an American – (inaudible) – that was attacked in – (inaudible) – firefight. We lost eight or nine lives. And it turns out that we were – (inaudible) – government officials who were at – (inaudible) – providing all of that.

At the same time, President Karzai greets our president-elect with a request that we cease air strikes, which of course is the only way to get up into the mountains when we can't get there. (Inaudible) – how do we fight this war from a military perspective? (Inaudible) – what do we?

ADM. MULLEN: It is a classic insurgency that is ongoing there. It is where – it is the country that's source, the threat which became very real and killed 3,000 Americans. And certainly by direction from the boss whom I know committed very clearly from this president – and certainly, if I – in reading what has certainly been a part of the campaign on both sides – think a future commitment there. And it's an insurgency that is growing, so it is very much a military conflict in many ways.

But it's not – and one of the things that is very obvious in Iraq and Afghanistan – I've seen insurgencies. There's an ongoing insurgency in the Philippines. Wherever it is ongoing, it is not military security. And the military and police who provide it is a necessary but not sufficient condition. We've got to provide enough security so that the people can be protected in which time they can then start to have lives, if you will, so they can put food on the table. We can get the economics going as well as the governance to be able to handle all that.

And the specific incident – each time we kill by accident any Afghan civilian, we set ourselves back. And we know that. The insurgents use civilians – have for a long time, are clearly. And the incident of which you speak, which just happened a couple days ago, the insurgents used local citizens for human shields. And that was the case here as well. So we know – we understand that. And we've got a fight. We've got to work our way through that.

Our people are sensitized to the need to protect the Afghan citizens. Certainly not bring in capability, which kills them, because as I indicated, that sets us back. So and again, this insurgency, this safe haven in Pakistan, is a place now that al Qaeda lives. And they still threaten us – one-two is – they are also providing. They and the Taliban are working together to provide insurgents, which are coming across that border to kill our forces and coalition forces. And that's the safe haven, one, that's got to go away, and two, cannot be resumed – in my view – cannot be resumed in Kabul and Afghanistan in the long run.

So it's going to take some time. We need some more forces to do that. But again, the security piece of this is necessary; it's not sufficient.

MR. : (Inaudible.)

ADM. MULLEN: Yes, ma'am. Hang on.

Q: (Inaudible) – Washington D.C. (Inaudible) – on a question on a point you just made. I'm curious as to whether you are familiar with the recent RAND report –

ADM. MULLEN: I am. Well, which RAND report, sorry?

Q: They did on main concerns in combat insurgencies. And the basic conclusion of it is that we need not so much the – (inaudible) – powerful force of the Pentagon in combating these insurgencies. But we need to build up the local – (inaudible) – on police forces. That's really the key to fighting these insurgencies. I'm wondering, do you agree? (Inaudible.)

ADM. MULLEN: We need to get to a point where we have built the security forces – not just the police – which includes the Afghan army, which has actually come along very well, the Afghan police force – and they really do provide the local security. And the police force development is far beyond the army. It's just where – because that again is not untypical for an insurgency.

And the challenge is dealing with some of those who would actually turn against us in order to – the incident that was just described in the newspaper or in the previous question. And winning and making that go away – in the long run, in a counterinsurgency, the locals will start to turn that police – that policeman in. We're not there yet in Afghanistan.

So what you talk is – what you mention is very much a part of it. But it's by no means all of it. And it isn't about us providing security in the long run. It is about training them, advising them, assisting them, providing security as well until they can take it over. And that's the goal. And actually, when that occurs, that's when we come home.

Q: (Inaudible) – a few months ago, I had an opportunity to participate in a roundtable of – (inaudible) – he was asked, what does he look for – (inaudible).

ADM. MULLEN: (Inaudible.) (Laughter.) No, I'm kidding. I'm kidding. I'll let you compare.

(Cross talk, laughter.)

Q: What he said was, be available. (Inaudible.)

ADM. MULLEN: My evolution with lawyers in the military has been a great one, in particular because I value – I so value their advice on now, I mean just a multitude of issues. But

in particular, as I watch lawyers in the Navy – and that was really where I grew up – evolve to operational level, operational law layers. Individuals who understood what rules of engagement meant, who understood a lot more about combat, who knew where the line was and would freely tell me that. And I would ask of my lawyer no more than I'd ask of anyone who was working for me, please, give me unvarnished military or unvarnished advice and recommendations.

So that's been the evolution. And clearly in my last two or three jobs at a very senior level, I have found them involved in almost everything I'm doing. And I don't say that – some might say that's not a great thing. I don't find that to be the case at all. And when I have a great lawyer, one, I keep them and I value them as much as anybody on my staff. So clearly, I need you around. I mean, I would also echo that. But I can't say enough about the importance in the world that we're living in of having that kind of advice.

Q: Sir – (inaudible) – I'm also a – (inaudible) – and I want to say thank you for making your – (inaudible). As a former Marine officer, I just want to say that that means the world to me knowing you're looking out for the lance corporals, the PFCs, and – (inaudible). My question is about the issue – (inaudible) – that you hear with regard to the – (inaudible) – warfare. I believe last year was the first time there was a joint document publication on irregular warfare. And what I want to get to is when I was in Iraq, there were a lot of – (inaudible) – operations going on, a lot of the kind of operations that seem to be counterproductive in terms of – (inaudible).

And what I'd like to ask is if there is a commitment that's coming from the top down – (inaudible) – no longer coming in many ways – (inaudible) – bottom up, junior officers – (inaudible). Is there a commitment that you – (inaudible) – of this administration into the next – (inaudible). I appreciate it.

ADM. MULLEN: We didn't know much about counterinsurgency in terms of widespread understanding throughout – particularly our ground forces. But it's more than just ground forces, because we had – we were a conventional force that focused on conventional warfare. And yet, look how rapidly – I don't know when you were there – but look how rapidly we have changed. And I assure you that the lessons are being learned, fed back, adjustments being made for every unit that is going. And we are, I believe, the best counterinsurgency force in the world. And three years ago, we hardly knew what it was from an institutional standpoint, even though there were those who understood this is what we needed to do.

So we've really changed pretty dramatically. And no better evidence of that in terms of its impact in getting it right has been the strategy that we executed in Iraq and which we are now executing in Afghanistan. And part of that is, back to the shortfall of troops, in addition to clearing out, to provide security, I've got to have enough troops to hold it. I can't just go secure it and then walk away because the insurgents blowback. And that's part of the whole counterinsurgency doctrine, which we're executing.

So I don't see us going back. And I see the commitment is virtually universal. But there are two aspects of this. I do not put aside conventional warfare in terms of its importance in the long run. And the Joint Chiefs all believe that. I think we need to be able to do it both. And there is this overlap. And warfare is warfare. And a lot of it is – and in that overlap, a lot of

what we need to do is the same and a lot of it has certainly specific requirements on the leading edge of counterinsurgency – and certainly on the high end of conventional warfare. And I believe we have to have a balanced force for the world we're living in. I talked about lots of challenges. We don't – we haven't predicted very well in the past. And it is that balance, I think, and the diversity that gives us strength for the future that I think is important as well.

And then the other thing, which gets to have we learned the lessons, which is always haunting, which is, are we going to fight the last war the next time? And if this is the last war, what does that mean for the next one? And I think that's the thought that we need to keep out in front of us as we look to the future. But certainly, for the foreseeable future, this capability is mainstream and will remain that way for about as far as I can see into the future.

Yes, sir?

Q: (Inaudible) – my name is – (inaudible) – how do you propose we do what you're talking about, stabilize, and defeat the insurgency. But at the same time – (inaudible) – acknowledging there is sanctuary in the area – (inaudible).

ADM. MULLEN: When you were what?

Q: (Inaudible.)

ADM. MULLEN: Right. And the area, to be specific, is a sovereign country, which is something we have great respect and regard for. And that's part of, clearly, the challenge. So I have gone to Pakistan six times since February to develop a relationship. I do very well by getting out and about in terms of what's going on as opposed to having someone mail it in or brief me or read about it. So I have worked hard on the mil-to-mil relationship with Pakistan, with the senior leadership there.

And it is evolving to, one, understand their challenges – to go to a country or a region and try to understand a problem through their eyes, not just through my eyes or our eyes, because I think that's important as well – and to recognize in that mil-to-mil relationship the potential for support and assistance which we are doing for a comprehensive approach from the mil-to-mil standpoint specifically in Pakistan, which we haven't had for a long time – starting with a time in the early '90s when they were sanctioned and we had no relationship with them for almost 12 years. So there is a big trust factor between the United States and Pakistan, the mil-mil piece, which has not been there. We've got to continue to build that.

General Kiyani who is the chief of staff of the army, has much the same challenge that our U.S. military had. He's got a conventional requirement up on the Kashmir border with India. That's still a threat to them. We may not think so. I assure you, I've been there. I've talked to a lot of Pakistanis. They do. Detentioning that threat, detentioning that border as much as possible is going to be very helpful. He's taking a counter – sorry, a conventional force – turning it into a counterinsurgency force. He's deploying at a pretty high op-tempo. He's got 10,000 more troops in the west than he had a year ago.

But it's not something – look, it took us two to three years to do. They're beginning to do that. And actually, they've been on fairly extensive operations here for the last several months, having an impact on that safe haven while we're able to have an impact on the other side. And I think that eventually gets at that. But that is both a big challenge and an opportunity for a longstanding relationship with a country that I think is a very, very important country in that part of the world and, actually, globally.

So I got the message. That's part of it. It's going to take – and you have described the problem that is the tension, because al Qaeda lives – al Qaeda leadership lives there still trying to kill us. It is a sovereign country. How do we get at that? We get at that in my view with the Pakistanis. And that's a really important part. And so a lot of us have worked that hard over the last several months. But it's going to take some time.

Q: I have – unfortunately – (inaudible) – I get the last question before turning it over to Al. And I'd like to know that, given that the admiral was a starter on the Notre Dame High School basketball team in Los Angeles, and the president-elect has been known to shoot a few, will you be sharpening up your jump shot?

ADM. MULLEN: Any other questions?